
TESTIMONY TO JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

MARCH 2, 2009

OPPOSED TO H.B. 6383 AN ACT DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF
LEGISLATION RAISING THE AGE OF JUVENILE JURISDICTION

JOHNNY (AGE 19)

Today, I am writing this letter because I have some thoughts and concerns about the Raise the Age law. First, I want to share my story with you. Throughout my past, I have been through many traumatic events. I was a child with serious anger problems. As a result of this, I admit I am a former juvenile offender myself. I have been in and out of detention centers for numerous charges. I received a 4 year commitment with an SJO (Serious Juvenal Offense). Even though I thought 18 months in CJTS was a long time, CJTS really helped me to control my anger and to stay motivated. It was the CJTS people I was able to talk to, that helped me change. I was able to sit down and explain my thoughts about life and they would help me figure out ways to separate that negative self.

After doing my time at CJTS I was put in the JCMC (Juvenile Case Management Collaborative) program at FSW, Inc.in Bridgeport. This program first helped me to get back into day school. After returning to day school, JCMC continued to assist me with any problems I had with homework, like essay-writing, letters and projects. I also am currently a senior so this year I have been looking into colleges. Staff at JCMC began to suggest some colleges that might interest me and we found one that interested me greatly in North Carolina called John C. Smith University. Staff mentioned the possibility of being able to go on a college tour at John C. Smith. On January 22, 2009 two staff from

JCMC and I went for the college tour. I really enjoyed visiting the college. I have seen and learned so much and now really look forward to furthering my education. Also, JCMC helped me obtain two after school jobs at law firms. I currently work for Pullman and Comely and also Rosnick and Miller. They are both law offices in Bridgeport.

Through my struggles to do well, this community program and their resources have helped me to become a better person and to strive to do well. What I am trying to say about the Raise the Age law is to not delay it because all the teens my age are just kids. We are kids that need to be given a chance to make a change. I feel that the community programs we have are good enough to help someone, but only if they want the help. They may act "annoying" and not well but if they want to better themselves, they have to strive forward. Before I left CJTS, one staff person told me "stop living that fast life and be a kid" and that is what it's about for kids my age who need a second chance. Thank You.

Johnny